

Computer-Based Released Items

Grade 8 MCAS Civics

Spring 2026

The spring 2026 grade 8 Civics test was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. Most students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for eligible students who were unable to use a computer. More information can be found on the MCAS Test Administration Resources page at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is releasing items from both versions of the test to provide information about the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate.

- Released items from the **computer-based test** are available online at mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items.
- Released items from the **paper-based test** are available in PDF format on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/release.html.

This document provides information about each released and unreleased operational item from the *computer-based test*, including the following: reporting category, standard covered, practice standard, item type, item description, and correct answer (for released selected-response items only). Sample responses and scoring guidelines for constructed-response items will be posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/default.html.

A Note about Testing Mode

Most of the operational items on the grade 8 Civics test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same Civics content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

Grade 8 Civics
Spring 2026 Computer-Based Released Operational Items

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	HSS Practice Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer **
1	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.3	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Use a diagram to determine which positions are part of each of the three branches of government.	see page 6
2	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.2	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Describe the role of the Cabinet using information from a source.	see page 6
3	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.3	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Determine a role of the U.S. Congress using information from a source.	B
4	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.2	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	CR	Use evidence from a source to describe how one branch of government can check the power of another branch of government.	
5	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.5	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Describe how political parties help elect candidates in Congressional elections.	A
6	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.4	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Analyze a map to explain one difference between the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.	D
7	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.4	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	CR	Evaluate a claim about the distribution of Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives using evidence from a map.	
8	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.2	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Determine how an amendment to the U.S. Constitution expanded the power of the legislative branch using information from a source.	see page 6
9	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.3	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Explain why an amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed using information from a source.	B
10	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.2	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	CR	Analyze two political cartoons and evaluate a claim using evidence from the cartoons.	
11	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.2	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	CR	Analyze an historical example to describe interactions between the three branches of the U.S. government and explain checks on executive and judicial power.	

*Civics item types are selected-response (SR) and constructed-response (CR).

**Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Page 6 of this document provides correct answers for technology-enhanced (TE) items. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for constructed-response items will be posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/default.html.

Grade 8 Civics
Spring 2026 Computer-Based Unreleased Operational Items

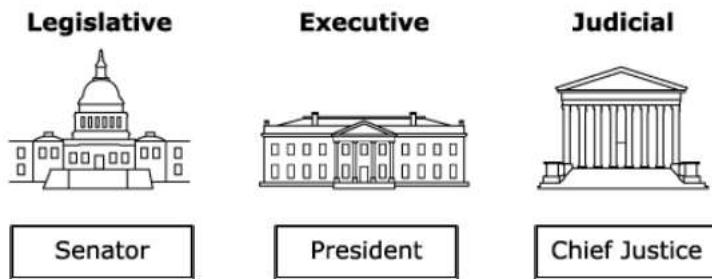
CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	HSS Practice Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
12	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.4	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a U.S. Supreme Court case to describe a principle of civic life.
13	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.5	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Describe a similarity between the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy using information from a source.
14	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T5.6	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Determine which First Amendment right protects given political activities.
15	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T2.5	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Describe the purpose of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution and describe a fundamental principle of the U.S. government expressed in the Preamble.
16	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T3.5	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Analyze the platforms from two political parties to support a claim about the role of party platforms in elections.
17	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.4	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze an historical event to describe how individuals worked to create a new law.
18	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.8	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Analyze an historical event to explain how individuals worked with elected officials on an issue.
19	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.8	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Analyze an historical event to describe the role of protests to influence the passing of a new law.
20	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.3	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Determine which characteristic of the U.S. government best supports a claim about an idea discussed by Enlightenment philosophers.
21	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.9	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a quotation about public service to describe a career in federal public service positions.
22	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T6.6	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Use information from the Massachusetts Constitution to explain a difference between the Massachusetts and U.S. constitutions.
23	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T2.1	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Determine how characteristics of the U.S. Constitution addressed complaints about the actions of Great Britain written in the Declaration of Independence.
24	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.8	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a description of a conflict between local, state, and federal government agencies to identify actions taken by the different levels of government and describe a role of individuals within the political process.
25	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.3	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Identify examples of activities related to an individual's political life.

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	HSS Practice Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
26	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T5.3	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Explain one purpose of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution using information from a source.
27	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T2.3	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a source to describe how the issue of separation of powers was addressed during the Constitutional Convention.
28	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.8	<i>Civic-based Questioning</i>	SR	Describe how a group of individuals can communicate with elected officials to take action on a community issue.
29	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T7.6	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze information from two op-eds and describe a feature to consider when evaluating the point of view of an op-ed.
30	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.1	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Describe how the concept of civic participation from ancient Athens influenced the U.S. government.
31	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.4	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Evaluate a timeline about some Massachusetts laws to explain why the laws were passed and how they helped develop democratic government in Massachusetts.
32	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.4	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Describe an individual right related to a U.S. Supreme Court case based on information from a source.
33	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T7.1	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a political cartoon and use evidence from a source to support a claim about the First Amendment and political change.
34	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T7.1	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a political cartoon to determine which First Amendment right is represented in the cartoon.
35	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T7.1	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a political cartoon to describe the author's point of view on a civic issue.
36	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.4	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Determine which feature of government is most similar to an idea expressed in the Mayflower Compact.
37	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T2.4	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Describe Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions on the U.S. Constitution.
38	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T4.12	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Use information from a source to explain how political protests can influence changes in government policies.
39	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.3	<i>Analyzing Sources</i>	SR	Analyze a description of an Enlightenment idea about government and determine how that idea influenced the Founders of the U.S. government.
40	<i>Government Structures</i>	8.T6.10	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Use information from a table to identify positions in local government and determine the branches of government to which the positions belong.

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	HSS Practice Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
41	<i>Foundations of Government</i>	8.T1.2	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Determine which form of government is most similar to a characteristic of the Roman Republic.
42	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T7.4	<i>Civic Knowledge</i>	SR	Explain one way digital news and social media may benefit democratic governments.
43	<i>Rights & Responsibilities</i>	8.T5.6	<i>Explanations and Reasoning</i>	SR	Analyze information from two court cases to describe a characteristic of the U.S. Supreme Court.

* Civics item types are: selected-response (SR) and constructed-response (CR).

Correct Answer for CBT Item #1: Technology-Enhanced Item



Correct Answer for CBT Item #2: Technology-Enhanced Item

The Secretary of the Interior is a member of the

executive branch ▼

 and

advises the president. ▼

Correct Answer for CBT Item #8: Technology-Enhanced Item

The passage of the 16th Amendment most likely
expanded

legislative authority. ▼